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STUDENT
ADVOCATE

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Parent Leadership Toolkit: Tools for Effective Advocacy

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Overview

As advocates, leaders, and community members, parents are capable of providing unique grassroots educational leadership in our schools. We cannot create high-quality schools without the partnership of parents. Empowering the voices of parents in our education system is critical to the success of our students.

Creating and establishing parent organizations are a useful and effective way to organize parent voices and amplify their power in the educational landscape. Effective advocacy involves identifying the purpose and objectives of the work in the communities, understanding the issues and opinions behind the causes, investing in the power of the advocates, and strategically leveraging available tools and skills to maximum utility.

This toolkit provides an outline of how to create and establish a parent organization with the right structure, leadership, and procedures for your school through the following steps:

1. Knowing the Issues
2. Understanding the Terms
3. Getting Started
4. Connecting Advocacy to Action, Goal/Agenda Setting, Establishing Mission & Vision
5. Nuts and Bolts – Establishing Procedures and Operations
6. Funding and Budgeting
7. Building Relationships and Partnerships, Establishing Trust, and Fostering Effective Communication
8. Diversity and Recruitment

Step 4: Connecting Your Advocacy to Action

Goal/Agenda Setting – Establishing a Mission & Vision Statement

Goal-Setting

Setting and defining clear goals for your organization are the very foundation of a successful organization. Goals define what the organization is trying to accomplish.

Provides Focus, Increases Motivation, Improves Group Cohesion, Clarifies the Groups Identity, Promotes Buy-in, Provides Mechanism for Accountability, Creates Openness and Transparency, and Ensures Progress is Measurable.

Goals should be:

S – Specific (or Significant).

M – Measurable (or Meaningful).

A – Attainable (or Action-Oriented).

R – Relevant (or Rewarding).

T – Time-bound (or Trackable).

Goal-Setting

How to Get Started:

- ① Know the issues and their relevance
- ② Know the strengths and weakness of the group
- ③ Know where you want to be within a specified amount of time
- ④ Determine who is contributing and their role
- ⑤ Establish how the goals will be communicated – what is the messaging?
- ⑥ Build in time to reflect and evaluate if the goals
- ⑦ Develop an Action Plan[s]: action plans describe the specific steps to be taken in order to achieve the goal.

Organizational Mission

“A mission is an organization's purpose or reason for being. The mission answers the question[s]”

① Who are we?

② What do we do?

“The mission is ongoing and does not change unless the core [function of the organization] changes...”

“A mission statement may be rather broad...[but]...provide[s] adequate definition of the organization. The mission does not change or get replaced as problems are solved... it is not as time bounded...”

Organizational Vision Statement

“A vision is an ideal image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization as it carries out its mission.”

“Values are a part of a vision statement...and represents an ideal rather than a specific achievement.”

Principles of Organizational Goal Setting
<http://www.bdrconsultants.com/goalsetting.pdf>

Goal-Setting & Action Plan: Resources

Setting concrete goals and clear action steps is the very foundation of a successful organization. Goals and action plans define what the organization is trying to accomplish.

[Determining Objectives for Your Parent Organization](#)

[Action Plan Template](#)

[Organizing Parents: Building Family Advocacy Organizations](#)